

**Washington, DC** - Earlier today at the National Press Club, Congresswoman Betty McCollum (MN-04) helped the launch of the Newborn Coalition - a group of advocates dedicated to raising awareness of newborn health care needs. The Newborn Coalition will work with policymakers to develop a technology-driven approach to improve outcomes for newborns via education, health care innovation, early detection and prevention, and rural health and telemedicine.

A long-time supporter of newborn and maternal/child health issues, Congresswoman McCollum applauded the kickoff of the Newborn Coalition, calling for additional support to address these health challenges.

"We have the ability to reduce the infant mortality rate in this country. We have the technology, the know-how, and the expertise to fight the statistics," said Congresswoman McCollum. "Through groups, such as the Newborn Coalition, we can effectively tackle this problem that unnecessarily plagues far too many newborn babies and their families."

Every year in the United States, over half a million babies are born prematurely. An estimated 28,000 children die before their first birthday - 1/6 of those from congenital heart disease alone. America's infant mortality rate - one of the highest in the industrialized world - is on the rise for the first time since the 1950's.

The Newborn Coalition's work will advance public policies that fight infant mortality and provide care for vulnerable newborns. The group will develop public-private partnerships that engage like-minded organizations, non-profits, the White House, Congress, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the Health Resources & Services Administration (HRSA), the National Institute of Health (NIH), the Center for Disease Control (CDC), and others.

"The broad range of expertise and insight of these individuals will ensure the federal portfolio affecting newborns continues to advance - and the health and well-being of newborns consistently improves," said Jim Bialick, Executive Director and Board Member. "The committee's focus on the newborn ecosystem and applicable research and pilot programs across federal agencies will be valuable in identifying the best possible opportunities to improve health outcomes for the youngest children."

The Newborn Coalition serves as an advocate for the newest, most vulnerable citizens and their families through partnerships that enhance health care delivery and health IT impact on newborns and families.

*Congresswoman Betty McCollum serves on the House Appropriations and Budget Committees.*

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